The Church and Her Members

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THE CHURCH AND HER MEMBERS

BY THE REV.

GEORGE H. BISHOP

WITH A FOREWORD

BY THE VERY REV. CANON

WILLIAM O. SUTCLIFFE, M.A.

DIOCESAN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS, WESTMINSTER

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FOREWORD

THE child is father to the man; hence it is most important for the child to have clear ideas about religion. If the child is well taught and learns definite and correct ideas, the man will have nothing to unlearn; he will have a clear light to guide him, and will be forearmed against dangers to faith which he may meet with in his daily life. And, further, he will be able to help others; a non-Catholic will not ask him in vain for an explanation of some Catholic practice or doctrine.

And one of the most important matters for a man to understand thoroughly is the nature of the Church, its origin, its powers, its work, and our duty towards it. Now that is what this little book seems to me to make quite clear, and in a way easily understood by the ordinary boy or girl. The happy comparison of the Church with other societies which they

know well must bring home to them in a vivid manner the chief things which they ought to know about it, and will help to lay a good foundation for their future life.

WILLIAM CANON SUTCLIFFE

November 2nd, 1920

THE CHURCH AND HER MEMBERS

CHAPTER I

I WONDER whether you have ever thought what a grand thing it is to be a Catholic? You have been one for as long as you can remember, and for that very reason it is quite possible that you do not think of that fact as anything very remarkable. You have grown so used to calling yourself a Catholic, that you do not stop to think of all that that word means to you. You know, there is an old saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt," or, in other words, we can grow so used to a thing that we "take it for granted," just like the air we breathe, and we never trouble to think about it, and try to see how wonderful it really is.

It is for this reason that I am going to have a few talks with you, and to try to help you to see that in being a Catholic you enjoy a very great favour from God; that in your Faith you possess a prize worth more than all the world can give, which you ought to value and guard carefully all your life.

What do we mean, then, when we speak about the Catholic Church ? The Catechism tells us that it is " the union of all the Faithful under one Head "; and that the " Head of the Catholic Church is Jesus Christ." The Faithful, then, are those who believe in Jesus Christ, and look up to Him as their Master, who saved them by His death, and who teaches them what they must do on earth, so as to save their souls and so be worthy to live with Him in Heaven for all eternity. We all know that Jesus Christ is God the Son, made Man: and, with that knowledge, we all wish to be His friends, and to do whatever we can to please Him. It is Our Lord's wish, too; and that is one reason why He came to live down here on earth for a time, so that He could draw us all to Him, and get us to love and serve Him.

Now it is not only one or two of us He wants, but all men. So, to make it easier for us, He founded His Church, that we might be all joined together to form one big body, or society. That is why we call the Church a " union," or a joining together, of His faithful followers.

It may help you to understand this better, if you think about some other " unions " which you know; for there are a lot of them

all about you, and people are always forming "unions" amongst themselves. For instance, perhaps your father belongs to a Trade Union. What does that mean? It means that those who work at a certain trade (carpenters, railwaymen, etc.) join together in a society, in order that they may help one another to work under proper conditions. By joining together they can insist upon having fair wages paid to them, upon not being worked for too long, and so on. If they were not thus united, they might have to put up with insufficient wages and many other bad things.

Let us take another example. Does your mother deal at the "Co-operative Stores"? There's a big word for you! It only means that people "work together" for some purpose: and the purpose of the Co-operative Stores is that a lot of people, banding themselves together, and so being able to deal with large quantities of goods, can buy those goods at a cheaper rate than they could do if they were not so joined together as a body.

Perhaps you know some other kinds of "unions": you yourselves may even belong to them. How about your various "clubs" —your football and cricket clubs—or even the Scouts and Boys' Brigade? You may call

them clubs, or corps, or anything else: really they are all "unions"—that is to say, gatherings or bodies of a number of people, all uniting for some definite purpose. Perhaps you can think of some others, besides those I have been speaking about.

Well, I want you just to think about these examples for a little, and to notice a few things about them.

1. Wherever you get a "union" of any kind such as I have mentioned, you will find that there is always a "governing body" in it—generally what we call a "committee." Certain of the members are appointed to rule the society, to see that it does the work for which it was formed, to apply the rules, and generally to direct the work of the society. And this committee itself has a "head," generally called the chairman, who is the head of the whole society. You must see that these are necessary when there are a lot of members, perhaps living a long way from one another, and seldom able to meet together. There must be a certain number who carry on the work of the society, and whom the other members obey.

2. Everyone who is a member shares in the advantages of the society. If you are asked to join some club, you would naturally ask,

"What good shall I get out of it?" "What is it for?" And if you found that it would do you no good to join, you would refuse. On the other hand, if you were quite sure that by joining you would obtain benefits which you could not otherwise enjoy, you would be very eager to be allowed to be a member. And since every society consists of a number of people who all agree to obtain some definite object, the society makes it easier for them to do that. For instance, if you join a football club, the club will provide the ground, the necessary balls and goal-posts, and will arrange matches; so that you, as a member, may be sure of getting a good game.

3. It is only those who are duly admitted into the society who can claim a share in the benefits. You might go about boasting that you belong to such-and-such a club; but unless you have really been accepted by the committee as a member, they will not recognize you: they will turn you off their field, and will not allow you to use their club-room, or play with their footballs, etc.

4. When anyone becomes a member of a society, he undertakes certain obligations. He may have to pay a subscription towards the society's expenses and upkeep; he will have to observe the rules of the society, and

do all that is necessary to make it a success. If he does not do these things, he is a useless member, more trouble than he is worth: the result will be that if he does not improve, after warning, he will be expelled from the society; he loses his membership, and has no further claim to the benefits.

Now just think these points over, and apply them to any society (union, club, or whatever name it may go under), and you will see that they are true of all.

CHAPTER II

IN my former talk with you I explained what we mean by a "union" or "society," and we noted some points that may be applied to every society which we know.

Well, we have learnt that the Catholic Church is a "union," so let us see if what we said about our clubs and other societies is also true of the Church to which we belong.

First of all, let us ask, "What is it for? Do I get any good out of belonging to it?" Of course, it is most important to get an answer to these questions; and the answer is quite simple. The object of the Church is twofold. Our Lord Himself founded the Church (1) in order to teach us what we must believe and do in order to save our souls; and (2) to give us all the helps we need to put into practice what we are taught. Ask yourself if you really want to save your soul, and to gain Heaven when you die, and I am sure you will at once answer, "Yes, of course I do." Then, don't you think it will be a great boon to you to have a society, the Church, which will give you every guidance and help so that

you may succeed ? It surely would be a very foolish person who would say he preferred to do without these helps. We know that we are very weak, and that we want someone to aid us; so if we are in earnest in wishing to save our souls, we shall be only too glad to know that we have a means of help at hand.

Now just recall what I said about the necessity of a ruling body in every society. This is also true of the Church. Our Lord appointed His twelve Apostles, to whom He delivered His teaching: and then He told them to " go and teach all nations." He also gave them authority when He said, " He that heareth you heareth Me: and he that despiseth you despiseth Me "; " Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven." They, therefore, were appointed to be the teaching and ruling body in Jesus Christ's Church. And just as every committee has its chairman at the head, so the Apostles had a Head, who was St. Peter. These Apostles, of course, are all dead, but they appointed men to succeed them; and these men we call Bishops, and at their head is the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, whom we call the Pope.

I shall have more to say about them in a later talk, but this will be enough for the present. We see that the Church is a society of millions of members spread all over the world; that amongst them there is a ruling body, whose duty is to teach and guide the others; and that the rest owe them a duty of submission and obedience when they teach and direct.

But they not only teach us; they also give us very great helps, so that we may live up to their teaching and find it easier to put into practice. There are the Sacraments, for example, which are "the chief means of our salvation"; and the Holy Mass, Indulgences, Confraternities, and many other means which we can consider later on. Don't you think these are great benefits, well worth having?

But how is anyone to become a member of this splendid society? You are already a member, and have been ever since you were quite a little baby. Shortly after you were born, you were taken to the church, and there the priest gave you the Sacrament of Baptism. You were too young to know anything about it at the time, but by that Sacrament you were admitted as a member of Christ's Church, and you have all the rights and privileges of a member: a right to ask for the Church's guidance and counsel; a right to ask for all the

spiritual help you feel you need in saving your soul.

But remember that, if you are going to share in the benefits, you must also do your part by "keeping the rules." If you don't do this, you forfeit your rights of membership, and you mustn't blame the Church if you don't receive the benefits from which you have cut yourself away. A good member knows he has to hear Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year at Eastertide, and to fulfil other duties. Some Catholics unfortunately grow very slack in their observance of the rules, and in consequence they lose most of the benefit they might otherwise enjoy. True, they do not at once lose their membership. The Church does all she can to get them to be better members, and to do their duty faithfully. It is only in an extreme case that the Church will cut them off altogether. Then we say that the person, who is no longer a member of the society, has been cut off from communion with the other members—*i.e.*, he does not share in the benefits which are common to the members; or we say he is "excommunicated."

CHAPTER III

WE have seen how the Church is a real society, and we have compared it with some other societies of which we know. But we must now note a certain difference, which is very important.

All those other societies of which we have been speaking were probably started (or "founded," as we say) by two or three people banding together for some purpose, and then getting others to join them, and to become members of the society. These then drew up the rules of the society, and elected their chairman and committee, and gave them the power to rule the society for a short time, perhaps a few years. Then these men would have to be elected again, or others put in their place. And the members have the power to alter the rules of the society when they think fit; but the committee alone cannot do this.

But the Church was founded by Jesus Christ Himself. It is His gift to us: so He planned it as He wanted it to be, and we must accept it from Him as He made it. We have no right to alter it at all, because the founder was God, and so He knew what was best, and

we must not imagine that we are wiser than God, and know better what the Church ought to be like.

God the Son came into this world, not only to save us by His death on the Cross, but also to instruct us in the truths of God, which God alone is able to teach us, and to show us the way to save our souls.

You can easily see how necessary this is for us. God is so great and wonderful, so much greater than we are, that we could never get to know enough about Him and what He wants us to do, unless He Himself tells us. There are many truths about God which we cannot fully understand, or find out for ourselves, and these truths we call "mysteries." Yet we must know and believe them, if we want to save our souls: so the only way is for God to tell us those truths; and this we call "revelation." Ever since God made Adam, He has been revealing truths to men, bit by bit. But when Jesus Christ came, He taught all that it was necessary for men to believe, and He also taught what we must do in order to save our souls.

You know how Our Lord went about for three years teaching the people in His own country. Some of them accepted His teaching, and became His followers, or disciples, and

did their best to live as He wanted them to do. Very many would not listen to Him at all, and they even put Him to death on account of His teaching.

Yet Our Lord wished His teaching to be given to all men; not only to those who were alive at that time, or who happened to be present when He was preaching, but to people in every part of the world, and at every time, right down to the end of the world. So He planned the Church, which should do that work after He had left the world at His Ascension.

In the first place, He chose out twelve men, who are called the Apostles (the word "Apostle" means "sent"), and He gave them special instruction in God's revelation. They were constantly in His company, and learnt from Him much that other people did not know. He said to them: "To you is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God" (Mark iv. 11). They were specially prepared to carry on Our Lord's work after He had gone from them. And when He had thus prepared them, He sent them in His name, saying, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19-20). And to show that their

teaching was to be accepted as though it came from Jesus Christ Himself, He told them: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16). And He gave them the power of ruling when He said to them: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). Here, then, we see the first foundation of the Church. The Apostles were taught by Jesus Christ Himself. He then sent them to teach other men what they had learnt from Him. Those who accepted their teaching were to be made members of the Church by baptism, and this Church was to be ruled by the Apostles in Christ's name.

CHAPTER IV

IT was on the Feast of Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday, that the Apostles began their work of teaching in the name of Jesus Christ, who had sent them. You can read about it for yourselves in the Acts of the Apostles.

On that day the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles, in fulfilment of Our Lord's promise, to strengthen them in their faith, and to give them courage and help in founding the Church.

After Our Lord's death, the Apostles had felt very frightened, and were afraid the Jews would try to put them also to death; so they shut themselves up in a room and would not face the people outside. But when the Holy Ghost had come, they were quite changed, and feared nothing. St. Peter at once began to preach to a great crowd of Jews who had assembled in Jerusalem, and he spoke boldly to them about Jesus Christ, claiming that He was the promised Saviour for whose coming the Jews were waiting. As a result of his preaching, three thousand people were

converted by him that day, and that was the beginning of the Catholic Church. After a time, the Apostles began to travel about, and wherever they went they preached about Jesus Christ to the people, and made many converts in different places. When an Apostle had thus founded a Church in one place, he would choose out a man who was well instructed, and leave him in charge of these new Christians, while the Apostle went on to continue his work in another place.

The man thus left in charge was called the "overseer," or Bishop: and his duty was to see that the truths taught by the Apostle were in turn taught to the people in his charge. He also had to take care that no false teaching crept in; and he had to train other men to be the priests and teachers under him, so that when he died there would be found someone fit and ready to take his place and carry on his work.

You will see that this work of founding the Church began in a small way. But it has been going on steadily from that day to this—a period of nearly two thousand years—and the little Church founded in Jerusalem has spread in course of time all over the world. This is a

fulfilment of Our Lord's words, when He compared His Church to a mustard seed, a very tiny seed, which yet grows up into a tree. That Church, which had so small a beginning, is now the Catholic Church to which you belong. It exists, not only in this country, but in every part of the world; and it is formed on the same plan and does the same work as when the Apostles lived on this earth.

Wherever you live, you belong to a diocese, which is made up of a group of churches or parishes; and over them all is the Bishop, who is the overseer of that diocese, and who has to take care that all the people in his charge are taught the truth about God, and that they receive the Sacraments, and all else that is necessary for the good of their souls.

Perhaps you have heard of the Bishop's coming to make a Visitation of your church. Very likely you were confirmed on the occasion of one of these Visitations. Do you know what the Visitation means, or what it is for? Remember what I told you were the duties of the Bishop. Of course, he cannot be everywhere and do everything, so you generally have your instruction, and receive the Sacra-

ments, from the priests of the Church which you attend. But the Bishop is responsible for all the churches, and priests, and people in his diocese; so he visits each parish at intervals to make sure that everything is going on as it should do, and to correct anything he may find wrong. If you will recall what I said about clubs, and other societies, you will see that the Bishops are, as it were, the officers or rulers of the Church, who see that the work is properly carried on, and that the " rules " of the Society are observed.

There is one other point I want you to notice. I said that every society must have a head, someone in the highest authority. In the Church, Jesus Christ is, of course, the Head. But it is necessary that there should be someone on earth who shall stand in His place, and represent Him and carry on His work. Hence, as the Bishops are the rulers, there must be a Head Bishop, higher in authority than all the others; and this is always the Bishop of Rome, who has the title of Pope (which means Father), and who, representing Jesus Christ as the visible Head of the Church, is also called the Vicar of Christ. A vicar means one who acts in place of somebody else, so the Pope acts on earth in place of Our Lord in Heaven. The other Bishops are

responsible to the Pope; and as they have to see after the people in their charge, so they have to answer to the Pope, as Vicar of Christ, for the welfare of religion in their dioceses.

CHAPTER V

YOU have now seen how the Church forms a true union or society. All its members are banded together for the purpose of their own sanctification and salvation. The Bishops, with the Pope at their head, have the duty, handed on to them from the Apostles, of teaching us how to save our souls, and of guiding and directing us. Theirs is the duty of instructing us in the teaching and revelation of Our Lord; and so they form that part of the Church which is called in Latin *ecclesia docens*, that is, the Teaching Church. All the rest of us, who learn from them, form what is called *ecclesia discens*, or the Learning Church.

Now, this may raise a difficulty in your minds. How is my Bishop my Teacher, when perhaps I have seen him only once or twice in my life, and then only for a short time? He is called the Teacher because he is the one authority in his diocese, and, as I have shown you, sees that the truth is really taught. Of course, he cannot do it all himself. Sometimes he teaches all his people when he writes what is called a Pastoral

Letter, which is ordered to be read in all the churches of his diocese; or when he actually preaches himself, as at Visitations and on other occasions. But for the most part, he teaches you by means of his priests, who are trained for this work, and also by means of your Catholic School-teachers, who also have to be specially prepared for this important duty. And, as I have already pointed out, he makes sure by his own enquiries that it is being properly done. And thus he is the chief Teacher of all his people.

If, then, the Bishops with the Pope are the Teachers of the Church, there are one or two very important questions we may ask about them. In the first place, we may ask, What have they to teach us? It is important that we should form a clear idea of the answer to this question.

You may remember that I have already said that there are many truths concerning God which we could never find out for ourselves, and which we therefore call mysteries. If we are to know about God, it is necessary that God Himself should make known these mysteries to us. From the time of Adam God began this work of revelation, giving knowledge to men bit by bit. When, in course of time, the Son of God Himself came on

earth, He gave to His Apostles the fulness of revelation; that is, He taught them everything that it was necessary for men to know about God in order to save their souls. This body of teaching we call the "Deposit of Faith," and it was this that the Apostles were commanded to teach when Our Lord told them to go and "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." They were to add nothing, to take away nothing, but only to teach "the Faith once delivered to the Saints" (Jude 3). This they handed on to their disciples, and they in turn handed it on unchanged through the centuries, to the present day. That is still the work of the Teaching Church, to teach that Faith, and in turn hand it on unchanged to their successors, even to the end of the world.

Now another question arises, which is of great practical importance to us. We might feel afraid that in the course of twenty centuries many changes and mistakes may have crept in to this teaching. After all, we notice changes going on continually around us. Men alter their opinions, and even their manners and habits. If we study our history books, we can see what a change there is in our own way of life, from that of a couple of hundred years ago. Well, would it not be

reasonable to suppose that the same is true of the Church and its teaching? Since this teaching is left in the hands of men like ourselves, surely they may make mistakes, or even, if they are wicked, deliberately change their teaching, so that what they now teach us is not what Our Lord Himself taught?

I think you will see that it is most important that we should be quite sure on this point; because we know that Jesus Christ taught the word of truth, and we want to have that, and nothing but that. The question, then, can be put like this: "Can I be sure that what the Church teaches me to-day is exactly the same as Christ taught His Apostles?" And the answer to the question is: "Yes, you can be absolutely sure."

If the Church had been left alone, with no one but men to look after it, then we could not have this confidence. But Our Lord foresaw the needs of His Church, and He promised to take care of it for all time, so that it should never fall away from Him, but would go on doing the work that He meant it to do. This promise I will talk about in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

WE read in St. John's Gospel (chapter i.) that after Our Lord had been baptized in the Jordan, two disciples of St. John the Baptist followed Jesus and had a talk with Him. One of these men, Andrew, went and found his brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus, saying that he had found the promised Messias. When he had come, Jesus gave him a new name, Cephas, for which the Latin form is Petrus, or, as we say, Peter, meaning "a rock." Afterwards, Simon and eleven others were called by Our Lord to be His Apostles; and at first, no doubt, they did not understand why Jesus should want to call Simon a rock.

But later on they saw the reason, when one day Our Lord asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said: Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter, answering, said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord called Simon blessed on account of this confession of his belief in His Godhead, and then went on to say these

striking words: " And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven " (Matt. xvi. 13-18).

These words are worthy of our closest attention, if we are to understand all that they mean.

In the first place, Our Lord says to Simon, " Thou art Peter," or " Thou art a rock," " and upon this rock I will build My Church." St. Peter, then, was to be the foundation of rock on which Christ would raise the building of His Church. And here we may recall Our Lord's parable of the two men, of whom one built his house on the sand of the seashore, and in the time of tempest it was overwhelmed by the wind and waves and washed utterly away: while the other man built his house on the rock, so that it was able to defy all the powers of nature by which it was assailed.

In like manner the Church, founded on Simon Peter, was to be founded, not on shifting sand, but upon firm, immovable rock, so that it would have the surest of foundations, and thus be strong to withstand all assaults.

And, further, Our Lord promised that the " gates of hell shall not prevail " against this rock-built Church. Now, by " the gates of

hell " is meant all the power of Satan and his wicked angels. Our Lord compares His Church to a strongly fortified city set on a rock. It is constantly being attacked by a most powerful enemy, who will leave nothing undone to conquer it if he can. Yet Our Lord promises—and His promises can never come to nothing—that in spite of all efforts the enemy shall never prevail over it.

The meaning, then, of this promise is that the Church founded by Jesus Christ shall never fall into the power of His enemies, and be wrested away from Him. The Church will always remain loyal and true to its Founder, and, having been instituted to teach men the truths of God, it shall never be found serving the purposes of the father of lies.

But this is not the only promise made by Our Lord to His Church. Although it was necessary that He should leave this earth, and deprive the Church of His visible presence, yet He did not mean to abandon the Church altogether. He was still to exercise a loving and watchful care over it from His heavenly throne. As He was speaking to the Apostles for the last time, just before His Ascension into Heaven, He gave them this promise: " Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world " (Matt. xxviii. 20).

So that we have the assurance of Our Lord Himself that He remains always with the Church, even though we cannot see Him with our bodily eyes, and that He keeps the Church faithful always to Him.

Yet this is not all that Our Lord promised. He made provision for the time when He had gone, and sent the Holy Ghost to carry on the work He had begun. "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever: the Spirit of truth" (John xiv. 16-17). "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (*ibid.* 26).

Put all these promises together, and ask yourself what they mean. Can they have any other meaning than that Our Lord has taken care that the Church which is to teach in His name, and to do that work in every country and through all time, shall never deceive those who listen to her teaching? That though we ourselves cannot look on Jesus Christ with our own eyes, nor hear His words with our own ears, yet we can be perfectly sure, without the slightest shadow of doubt, that the words of God's saving truth are

given to us by the Church, which was divinely appointed for that very purpose? We know, then, for certain that the Church cannot go wrong in what she teaches as to the things we must believe or do in order to be saved, for she is given to us by Jesus Christ to be our guide in these matters—a guide that, according to His promise, can never lead us astray into error.

CHAPTER VII

YOU have seen that the Church, instituted by Jesus Christ to be our Teacher in faith and morals, cannot lead us into error. This does not mean that no Bishop can go wrong in his teaching. Unfortunately there have been heresies in the Church, and some of these have even been started by Bishops. Yet their false teaching will quickly be detected by the others and condemned, as has always been the case. Our Lord's promise means that the general body of the Church's Teachers will never be allowed to fall away and lead us astray. In order that this may be so, Our Lord has made a special promise about the Head of His Church, the Pope. He has a special privilege, which belongs to his position as the successor of St. Peter.

In order to understand this, we must see what promises were made to St. Peter. In the first place, you must recall what I told you about St. Peter being the rock, on which the Church is founded. The rock, of course, is unmoved by even the fiercest tempest. It was because Jesus Christ wanted to impress

on our minds that His Church could never be overcome by the powers of hell that He declared He would build it on an unchangeable rock; and that rock, as you have seen, was St. Peter. Thus Our Lord meant that though others might fall away, St. Peter should always remain faithful. We have a further promise of this in the following words of Our Lord to St. Peter: " Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have *you* [that is, *all* the Apostles] that he may sift *you* as wheat: but I have prayed for *thee* [St. Peter] that thy faith fail not: and *thou*, being once converted, confirm thy brethren " (Luke xxii. 31-32).

Now, from these words you can see that the Devil would always have a special hatred of the Apostles, and their successors, who should be doing the work of God; he would leave nothing undone to get them away from the truth if possible. Our Lord, though He foresaw this quite clearly, does not say He prayed for them, but that He prayed for Simon, the rock, that he might never be led away himself. Our Lord's prayer, of course, cannot be supposed to go unanswered. We may be quite sure that what He prayed for was granted, and that therefore St. Peter was divinely preserved from error for the sake of the Church. Then, since he had this great

privilege, he was given the duty of "confirming his brethren"; that is, of looking after them and seeing that they too remained faithful to the teaching of Our Lord.

And since this duty of overseeing and confirming was given to St. Peter because he was the firm foundation of the Church, the promise and the privilege thus given to him, as being necessary for the welfare of the Church, did not die with him, but descended to his successors so long as the Church shall exist. You can see that this must be so, because the Church always has to withstand the same assaults of the Devil as it did in the time of the Apostles. Unless the Pope, as Head of the Church, had the same powers as St. Peter, the first Pope, we could never be sure that Our Lord's promise that His Church should never fail could be fulfilled; the Bishops who teach us to-day need to be "confirmed" by the Pope, just as the rest of the Apostles were "confirmed" by St. Peter.

You must not think that when Our Lord said "confirmed" here, He meant the Sacrament of Confirmation. It rather means this: that whereas any Bishop, or even a group of Bishops, might make a mistake as Teacher of the Church, they can look to their Head, the Pope, knowing that he will be able

to correct their mistake, and make their faith firm, in the knowledge that, however others may err in matters of faith or morals, the Pope will not be mistaken.

I have spoken of the Bishops; but it is not only they who are benefited by this privilege of the Pope, but every one of us. We can always be sure of what we believe. You know that Faith is the "supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe *without doubting* whatever God has revealed." We have to learn what God has revealed from the Teachers whom He has appointed for that purpose. How could we believe "without doubting" if we could never be sure whether our Teachers were right or wrong? Our Lord has removed our difficulty by providing that in these matters there shall always be one—the Pope—that we can look to with absolute confidence that he will be preserved from error, and that he will keep the others also from falling into error. This is a great and wonderful benefit, for which we should always thank Our Lord, who has not left us to save our souls in the midst of darkness and doubt, but has given us a sure and certain light to lead us to salvation.

This privilege, granted to St. Peter and the Popes, is called the "Infallibility of the

Pope." It is often misunderstood by those outside the Church, and sometimes not clearly understood even by those in the Church, so I shall tell you more about it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

IT is very important that you should understand clearly what is meant when we say that the Pope is infallible. The word itself means "unable to make a mistake," hence also, "unable to lead others wrong, or to deceive them." Now this, as I have already told you, makes a great difficulty for those outside the Church. They ask, "How is it possible for a mere man to be infallible? Everyone is liable to be mistaken, even the wisest of men. It is absurd to say that the Pope alone of all men can never be mistaken. He is claiming a power that belongs to God only."

Well, let us consider the argument for a bit, and see whether the claim of infallibility is really so absurd as some try to make out.

In the ordinary affairs of life people often differ from one another, and if we are to get on at all, there must be some way of settling our differences. We must look to someone whom we trust to settle our disputes, and we must abide by his decision. Thus, even if that man

be liable to make mistakes, there comes a point when we have to act as though he were, in fact, infallible.

Let me try to show you what I mean. No doubt you have learnt in school something as to the way we are governed. You know that the laws are made by the King and Parliament. They are called Acts of Parliament, and bind all the King's subjects. I wonder if you have ever read an Act of Parliament? If so, you will know that generally they are not at all easy to understand. Different people, even clever lawyers, put different meanings to them, so there is plenty of room for disagreement as to what the law actually is. Let us suppose there are two men, whom we will call Jones and Brown, who thus disagree. Each, of course, thinks he is right, and will not give in. The only way is to go to someone who has authority to decide between them. So they go to the Law Courts, and put their arguments before the Judge. He is a man who is skilled in the law, and he uses his skill and knowledge to decide what is the true meaning of the law about which Jones and Brown differ. We will suppose that the Judge decides that Jones is right, and he gives judgment in his favour, and we say that Jones

wins his case. But what about Brown? He may still think that the Judge was wrong in so deciding. He knows that the Judge is an ordinary man, probably much more learned in law than Brown; yet Brown thinks there has been a mistake made, and that he ought to have won the case. Can he do anything more? Yes, he can "appeal"—that is, he can take the case to a higher Court, where it will be tried again, this time by three Judges of great experience. When they have heard all the arguments, and studied the Act of Parliament, they may decide in one of three ways: (1) The three may say Jones is right; (2) the three may say Brown is right, and so upset the former judgment; or, (3) two may be in favour of one side, and one on the other, and then the judgment goes to the side favoured by the two who agree. Let us suppose the last is the case with our friends Jones and Brown. Two of the Judges have decided for Brown this time, while only one was in favour of Jones's opinion. Now Brown has won the case on appeal. But Jones argues to himself that after all the first Judge was in his favour, and also one of the higher Judges; that is, two learned men for one opinion, and two for the opposite. Both sides cannot be right, and

now Jones feels there is much to be said for his view of the law's meaning, and he means to get the question settled. Can he appeal again? Yes, there is a still higher Court to which he can go if he wishes. The House of Lords forms a Court, made up of a number of men who have been Judges or other high officers of law, and who are considered the greatest authorities on questions of law. They hear the case again, for the third time, and give their decision. Let us suppose it is in favour of Jones again: he won the first time, lost the second, and now has won for the third time. Can the Judges possibly be wrong in their decision? Of course, it is possible, even if not very likely. At any rate, we must stop somewhere, and Brown now cannot go any farther. The Law Lords have given their decision, and that is taken as the final decision. Their interpretation of the law is accepted by all Judges and lawyers as the binding decision, and all future cases will be decided according to their interpretation of what the law means.

It is not only in the law that we feel the need of an authority whose decision shall be final and binding: we see the same need in every department of our daily lives, in

our clubs and societies, in our schools and homes.

Now apply my illustration to the question of religion. As you have already seen, Our Lord gave us His teaching nearly twenty centuries ago. You can imagine for yourself how difficult it might be for us to decide now, after all that time, what Our Lord actually meant to teach. If we want to know, we learn in the first place from our parents, school-teachers, and priests. To check their teaching, there is a higher authority, the Bishops. But highest of all, the one who gives the final decision where necessary, beyond whom there is no appeal, is the Head of the Church—the Pope. Ordinarily speaking, if the Church were a mere human society, it would have to have a head, whose decisions must be accepted as final and binding in practice, even if he were but a man liable to make mistakes. We can see, then, that it is in no way absurd, but very desirable, to have someone who can decide matters of doubt. The only difference in this case is, that whereas in other questions, such as those of law, the final decision may possibly be in fact wrong, Our Lord has promised that when the Head of the Church gives a decision, God will so provide that that decision shall be absolutely right, without

possibility of being wrong. Of this I must say more in the following chapter; but for the present I ask you to think well of this, and try to be quite clear in your mind about it.

CHAPTER IX

YOU have seen the practical necessity for every society to have some final authority to settle disputes or doubts. But there may be some difficulty in believing that in the case of the Pope his decision will always be right. Yet a little thought will show us that this must be so: because Jesus Christ has promised that His Church shall never teach what is not true; but if the Head of that Church, who is the final authority, could go wrong, then we should never feel sure that Our Lord's promise was being fulfilled. His promise would be of no value, it would have failed, and that we can never believe. It follows, then, that in order that the Church may be our infallible teacher, the Head of that Church must also be infallible.

There are many people who make mistakes about "infallibility," because they do not quite understand what is meant by it. Some think it means that the Pope cannot commit sin, as other men do. I suppose they see the word "infallibility," and think it means "unable to fall (that is, into sin)." As I have

already told you, the word does not mean this, but it means "unable to deceive, or lead wrong." Of course, the Pope is liable to fall into sin and needs all the help of God's grace, just as we do. So infallibility has nothing to do with sinning.

There is another mistake which many people make. They think that we claim that the Pope is infallible in everything he says, and that when he declares a thing to be so-and-so, it *is* so-and-so, whether it is or not. Of course, such a claim would be absurd. In the first place, we do not claim infallibility for the Pope in every matter. Remember, the Church was given us to instruct us in matters of faith and morals: and it is only in dealing with such matters that the Pope can be infallible. If the Pope came to your school to-day and gave you a lesson in history or geography, he might make mistakes in what he taught you; he might get a sum wrong just as you do, and if in adding 2 and 2 he got the answer 5, you would not be right in saying that 2 and 2 make 5 because the Pope got that answer, and he is infallible! You see his "infallibility" does not help him at all in these things.

But suppose the Pope, instead of teaching you history and so on, were to take your

Catechism class, and give you an instruction on, let us say, the Sacraments. Then he would be teaching you about your Faith; could he possibly make a mistake then? Yes, even then he could make slips and mistakes, just as any other person might. Well, then, you may say, where does his infallibility come in? You ought to be able to answer this question for yourself, if you have quite grasped what I have already told you about the Church and its Head. If the Pope gave you an instruction, he would not be speaking to your class as Head of the Church, but as an ordinary teacher, although, of course, you would feel highly honoured to have such an exalted Teacher come to you even for one lesson. Again, when he was instructing you, he would not be settling any doubt or dispute, for the benefit of the whole Church. You will remember, in the last chapter, I spoke to you about disputes as to the meaning of laws being decided by the Courts of Law. Well, much the same thing takes place in the Church. Our Lord, as I told you, left a certain " deposit of faith " to be taught in all ages. From time to time there may arise doubts or disputes in the Church as to what actually was taught by Our Lord. Such a dispute may be settled in various ways: a

single Bishop might settle a dispute in his diocese; perhaps a General Council of the Bishops of the whole world, with the approval of the Pope, might decide; but the last decision lies with the Pope, as Head of the Church. If the dispute is brought before him he will enquire into it, and will finally declare which of the conflicting doctrines is the doctrine given by Jesus Christ, and therefore to be held of faith by all Christians. We say the Pope, in doing this, "defines" a doctrine of faith or morals; that is, he marks out and makes clear what is the true teaching, so that all may know for certain exactly what they have to believe on any particular question. It is only in this case, when the Pope, acting as Head of the Church, *defines* a doctrine of faith or morals, to be held by the whole Church, that we believe his definition is unalterably true, and that he has spoken infallibly.

There is one other point you must notice, as people sometimes have a wrong idea about it: the Pope is not "inspired" when he thus acts in defining. You must not fancy that the Pope suddenly gets an inspiration from God, and says, "I'll make a new definition of faith to-day, and tell people they must believe it." What I have already told you

ought to show that this is not the case. God has made no such promise to the Pope. When a dispute has to be settled, the Pope gets no special revelation as to what is the truth of the matter. He will use the ordinary means of finding out, and so reaching a true decision. He will use his own knowledge, which he has got by study just as you do; he will have the help of other learned men as well. Our Lord's promise means this, and only this, that the Holy Ghost, watching over and guiding the Church, will, by His Grace, so arrange matters that the decision to which the Pope comes shall be the right one, and not the wrong; and thus we are preserved from the possibility of error in these matters. The work of the Holy Ghost is a special working of God's Providence, whereby he guards our Faith, but it is not a sudden inspiration, or a miracle. Let us suppose, for a moment, that the Pope, even after doing his best, came to a decision that actually was untrue (and, of course, this is quite possible). Then the Holy Ghost would prevent him, in some natural way, from imposing that decision on the Church. The Pope might die before he could give the decision he meant to give; or a war might break out and prevent him; or any of a million different events might

put a stop to it. All we can say is, that God prevents, in one way or another, the Pope from giving a false definition, and so arranges matters that when a definition is given, it shall be infallibly true.

CHAPTER X

HAVING been brought up all the days of your life in the Catholic Church, you have always believed it to be the Church founded by Jesus Christ. You have seen the beauty of it, and no doubt has ever entered your head as to its claim on your faith and love.

But many people, not Catholics, have not this same feeling of security. You will understand this if you call to mind all the various churches and chapels you know round about where you live. There is the Catholic church which you attend regularly, and perhaps other Catholic churches which you visit sometimes; then there will be one or more churches of the Church of England, the Congregational, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Baptist churches; the places of worship belonging to the Quakers, the Salvation Army, and a lot of others as well. If you were to visit all these, you would find that they do not agree at all in their teaching. They contradict one another, and so it must be quite clear that they cannot all be true. Some people lose patience and say none of them

is true; but this is not reasonable, because one may be true, and all the rest false.

Now, that is where the difficulty comes in. You can imagine somebody who is not a Catholic, or perhaps belonging to no particular Church, thinking in this way: "I know that Jesus Christ founded a Church, and that He meant me to belong to it, so as to save my soul. I would gladly join His Church if I could only be sure I had found it. But how can I be sure which is the true Church out of all those I see around me? They all *say* they teach the true religion: yet they all contradict one another. How can I judge them, if I am not very clever and learned? How can I come to a true decision?"

You will see there is a very great difficulty, which you have not had to face. You should feel great pity for these people who want to do what God wants, but do not know how. You can help them by praying God to give them light, and sometimes you can help them yourself, if they come and tell their difficulty to you.

We may well suppose that since Our Lord meant all men to be saved by His Church, He would not leave them without some way of finding out which one it really is. He has, in fact, left us the means of testing the

Churches and thus finding out. The Church of Christ has four marks, or signs, by which we may know her from all the false Churches. If any Church claims to be Christ's Church, apply the test; see if it possesses all the four marks—not one or two, but all. It will be found that only one Church passes the test—the Catholic Church. The others may possess one or other of those marks, but not all four together. Hence they fail under the test, and can be put aside as not being the Church of which Jesus Christ was the founder.

You probably know what these four marks are, they are named in the Nicene Creed: the true Church must be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

1. *The Church must be One.*

Our Lord taught a definite body of truth, which He meant all men to believe. All the members of His Church were to be united in this belief so as to form one fold: "There shall be made one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 16). "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. iv. 5-6). It is quite certain that Our Lord could not have taught things contradictory to one another. We shall expect, then, to find in His Church

that all the Teachers teach the same, that all the people agree with one another in what they believe: that they all offer the same sacrifice, and receive the same Sacraments: and that, being one body or society, the various parts are joined to one another under the rule of the same Head; just as the members of our body—legs, arms, fingers, etc.—are united together under the direction of our head.

Let us apply this test. In the Catholic Church you find that the members, spread over the whole world, all believe the same. All recite the Creeds, which sum up our beliefs, and believe them in the same way. Catholic Bishops and priests agree with one another in their teaching, and all teach the same doctrines. If you go to Canada, or India, or China, or anywhere else, and enter the Catholic church, you know you will get exactly the same teaching there that you get at home. You will find there the same Sacrifice of the Mass being offered; you will receive the same Sacraments as you do at home. You will also find that the Catholics in those far-off lands look to the Bishop of Rome as their Head, just as you do; and in this loyalty to the Pope as Vicar of Christ, we feel that we are all bound together in one big family.

And how do the other Churches stand the test? You will find that they do not agree. Their ministers teach different doctrines, and the people often differ from their teachers. Some say the Mass is necessary; others deny it, and say it is idolatrous. Again, some teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation, others that it is not: and so on, with nearly everything which we believe. They do not agree as to whether Our Lord gave us seven Sacraments, or only two. They are hopelessly divided amongst themselves: they look to no Head with authority to settle their differences; and so they fail to pass the test of Unity, or Oneness.

2. *The Church must be Holy.*

Jesus Christ, because he was God, could teach us only what is a holy doctrine. His one desire is to help us to be holy, and so to save our souls. Now the holiness He desires in us is not a mere avoidance of grievous sin. He does not want us to aim at being "fairly good"; but He told us, "Be ye *perfect*, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). Hence all His teaching, which is given to us by His Church, always puts this high ideal before us, for us to strive after

it. Our Lord's own life was the model for our imitation, and it was a holy life.

As we study Our Lord's life, we note that it was not a life of pleasure, and amusement, and self-indulgence; but rather one of poverty and terrible suffering, borne patiently in obedience to God's will. In His agony He prayed: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice [of suffering] pass from Me. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt*" (Matt. xxvi. 39). Here was a wonderful example of perfect holiness. But surely He does not expect *us* to imitate Him in this way? Listen to Him speaking to you: "He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 38). And again: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23).

This is the teaching of the Catholic Church to-day, as it was of its Founder. The Church teaches her children to practise mortification and self-denial, by fasting and almsdeeds: she teaches us to live in constant communication with God through prayer. By her Sacraments, and by means of sacramentals, devotions, religious confraternities, and in many other ways, she helps us to keep ourselves "unspotted from this world" (Jas. i. 27),

to fix our desires on Heaven, and not on the vanities, riches, and pleasures of this world.

You will notice that the Church teaches a life of hardship, and not of ease. For instance, you have to get up and go to Mass on Sunday, even though you would be more comfortable in bed. When you receive Holy Communion, you must do so fasting. No doubt it would be nice to have a cup of hot tea and some bread-and-butter before going out in the cold—but the Church asks you to bear this cross for the love of Jesus Christ, so that you can grow more like Him, and win His love. It is not at all pleasant to go without your regular meals, and fast during Lent, and at certain other times. But if you do it, your soul will gain in strength, and you will grow in holiness.

Perhaps you will object that after all there are many Catholics who are not holy, and you may wonder how the Church can be holy in that case. People often argue in this way, but they make a mistake. The Church cannot *force* people to be holy against their wills. Even the Almighty God has limited His power, as it were, by giving men free wills; that is, He leaves them free to choose, to do or to leave undone, and He will not force them. So, too, God's Church can only

do what God permits her to do. It is enough that her teaching is itself holy, that she offers to all men the means by which they may become holy, if they choose to accept them and make use of them. Beyond that she cannot go. So if some people refuse to hear the Church, if they will not practise what she teaches or make use of her Sacraments and other means of grace, if they prefer to live lives of sin, the blame is on them and not on the Church. True, such people bring great shame on the Church, but none the less the Church is holy. On the other hand, we see vast numbers of men and women, and even children, of all times and all nations, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, who have profited by what the Church has to give them: we can see them living around us, and watch their growth in virtue and holiness. Many reach an outstanding degree of holiness, and are honoured as the great Saints of the Church. Think of the glorious names of the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins, who lived and suffered for Christ. They were boys and girls, men and women, exactly like ourselves. Why did they become so holy? Because they followed the Church's teaching, and used her means of grace. Each of us can be holy, if only we will, in the same way.

But apply the test of "holiness" to the other Churches. You will find much holiness in them, but not to so high a degree. Generally speaking, you will find that they teach us to make the best of both worlds; to enjoy the good things of this life, not to make ourselves uncomfortable, but just to keep away from gross sin. If you feel sleepy on Sunday morning, they will not mind if you stay in bed, and go to an evening service. They do not ask you to observe Lent, or to abstain on Fridays, or be fasting before Communion. They do not expect you to do anything so humbling as to accuse yourself of your sins to a fellow-man. You see, the standard set is lower, and as a result, although we find many very good people in these Churches, we look in vain to find examples of the heroic virtue which is such a distinguishing mark of the Saints produced by the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XI

3. *The Church must be Catholic.*

THE word "Catholic" comes from two Greek words, and means "over the whole": we also use the word "universal" to explain "Catholic": this is a Latin word, and means having to do with "the whole" or "all together." So when we say Christ's Church is "Catholic," or "universal," we mean that it is made for *all* people, *all* times, and *all* places.

Our Lord, as you know, came down here to teach and save all mankind. He did not die merely for the Jews, nor for those only who lived in His own time on earth. You have already seen that He sent His Apostles to "teach *all* nations," and that He promised to be with His Church "*all* days, even to the consummation of the world." Hence it is quite clear that He meant His Church to receive everybody, and to keep out nobody who wished to come in. He desired it to be the only way in which men should be saved, just as Noe's ark was the way appointed by God to save those who entered into it. That

is why your Catechism tells you that the Church is " the *one* ark of salvation for *all*."

You can see that other Churches are not thus universal or Catholic. Many of them exist only for a time, and then die out. They do not attempt to include everybody, but only certain classes of people. Again, the teachings of one of these Churches may suit certain persons, while others do not like them at all. One Church, perhaps, may be well suited to the character of Englishmen, let us say, but would not suit a Frenchman, and so on.

With the Catholic Church it is different. She has been teaching the same truths in all ages—in the time of the Apostles, in the Middle Ages, in our own days, and will continue unchanged through ages to come. Her teachings are suited to men of every nation, of every station of life, of every age, whether old or young. She has been set up in every part of the world, and has been looked on as the Church of the nation, wherever her enemies have not managed to drive her out for a time. So in every way the Church is truly Catholic, or universal.

There is one difficulty that may occur to you in this regard. You may say that the Church of England is spread throughout the

British Empire, which extends over nearly every part of the world: her missionaries are found preaching to the heathen in far-off lands. The Salvation Army, too, is not confined to England, but has its members in many foreign places. Well, then, are not these (to mention but two) also Catholic—that is, spread over all the world ?

No; because the Church is not universal only on account of the number of lands in which she is found, but also because she exists at all times, and includes all people. The other Churches or religious bodies have been teaching only for a few hundred years at the most; some were started within living memory; so that they are not universal in time. Then again, although their numbers may be in fact great, yet we find they do not appeal to the minds of all men. They may have flourishing branches in this place or that, yet compared with the mass of people, their numbers are quite small.

If you travel to India, say, you will find the Church of England set up there in many places. But what people attend her services ? The greater part will be found to be the English people who have settled down there, and brought their Church with them. You will find very few natives attending the

services. But go into the Catholic church in the same town, and there you will find not only those Englishmen who happen to be Catholics, but also many native converts, all joining together in the common worship of God, and listening to the same sermons and instructions. They are all united in the one Faith.

You can see, then, that there is a great difference, even in the universality of *place*, between the Catholic Church and other Churches.

CHAPTER XII

4. *The Church must be Apostolic.*

YOU have seen how Jesus Christ's Church was founded on St. Peter and the Apostles. To them alone was given the command to go and teach all nations with Divine authority. To them alone was entrusted the precious gifts of God's revelation to man, and of the Sacraments which were to be the chief means by which we are saved.

The Apostles themselves could not continue their work for ever. They did the duty appointed to them, and in God's due time they died as other men do. But God did not mean His gifts to mankind to perish with the Apostles' death. They still had to be handed down the centuries. So the Apostles chose out men to be their successors in their place. To them they handed on the teaching received from Jesus Christ, and they instructed them in the laws and the traditions of the Church; they consecrated them Bishops, with authority, or power, to rule their people, to teach and guard them from error: they ordained priests to offer the Holy Mass and to administer the Sacra-

ments; they ordained deacons to help the Bishops and the priests. And so that the Church might not die out they gave the Bishops power to provide new ministers for the Church according to her needs.

Thus through all the years the teaching and the sacred ministry of the Church have been handed on unchanged from age to age, and without a break. So, if a priest to-day has power to consecrate the bread and wine, and to change their substance to that of the Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord, it is because he can trace his power back to the Apostles, through the Bishop who ordained him. In the same way, if a priest has power to forgive sins, it comes to him from the Apostles. If he claims your belief in his teaching, or your obedience to his authority, it is, again, because he receives these from the Apostles, to whom they were given by God Himself. Thus, the Church's Orders come from the Apostles.

The Pope also claims jurisdiction (that is, power to govern) over the whole Church, because he can trace his succession back in an unbroken line to St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be Head of His Church.

If, then, we are taught to reverence and respect and hear the pastors of the Church,

it is not because they may be clever men, who are able to teach us something new, but because they represent in our own time the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and because they deliver to us the same doctrines and traditions that the Apostles taught.

You can see quite clearly, I am sure, that the Church, in order to be the true Church, must be Apostolic in the way just described to you. Well, try whether any Church, other than your own, is Apostolic in the same way.

Some of them still have Bishops and priests, who trace their Orders back to the Apostles: yet they fail in other ways. They teach other doctrines and traditions; or they have broken away from the Pope, through whom their authority should come. Others again, like the Protestant Churches, have either started without any Divine authority at all, or they have done away with Bishops and priests altogether, so that they have broken away from what we call the "Apostolic succession," or unbroken line of descent from the Apostles.

Here, then, you have seen the Four Marks, every one of which must be found in the true Church of Jesus Christ, and without which no Church can be true. It needs only a little consideration and enquiry to prove that there

is only one Church in the world that has all these marks in their fulness. Other Churches may have them in part, but the Catholic Church, in union with the Pope as her Head, is the only one which can claim to fulfil *all* the conditions, and thus deserves to be called the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

We thus have to be thankful to Our Lord for having made His Church plain to all men who care to see. We have not been left in doubt and uncertainty as to which is the true Church. She is in truth the "city seated on a mountain" which "cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14). And we can keep our souls in peace, knowing that what we learn from the Catholic Church is in very truth the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

CHAPTER XIII

I WANT you to recall for a moment what I said when I compared the Church to some club or society. You remember I told you a club was formed to give some advantage to its members, and to help them in gaining the end for which it was formed.

Well, you have seen now what the Church is for: she is meant to tell us what we have to believe, and what we must do, in order to be saved; and I have shown you how she does this. There remains another question to be answered: " How is the Church going to help me to do what she tells me to do ?"

This is indeed a very important question, as you can see, because it is often easy to say something must be done, and not quite so easy to do it. This is certainly true in the very important work of saving our souls. We may know what is right, and yet find great difficulty in putting it into practice: so often " the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak " (Matt. xxvi. 41). If we were left to ourselves, we should soon find that we can do no good work of our own power towards our salvation. We should discover

that we could not stand up successfully against those enemies of our soul, the Devil, the world, and the flesh, against which we have to be always fighting.

We need some strength that we cannot find in ourselves; something which is above what our own weak human nature possesses, and which is therefore *supernatural*, or above nature. This help is to be had, and it comes as a gift from Almighty God. We call it *sanctifying grace*, and so powerful is it that with its aid we can overcome all the enemies of our soul.

Now it is this very grace or help which the Church gives us, in order to make the work of saving our souls more easy for us. There are many ways in which the Church gives this grace to her children, but I shall here point out only a few of the most important ones.

In the first place, there is Prayer, which is a speaking with God. We raise up our minds to Him, by thinking of Him, and imagining ourselves in His presence, looking on Him with the eyes of our soul, then raising our heart to Him by pouring out our praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, by asking pardon for our sins, and begging from Him all the other helps and graces we need. The Church is continually sending up a stream of prayer

to God for her children, and she teaches us to join in this wonderful exercise, because by it God is moved to pour out His graces into our poor weak souls.

Next, there is the Sacrifice of the Mass, by which God is worshipped in a manner due to His awful majesty, by which we are reminded of God's overflowing love in dying for us, by which we are moved to sorrow for our sins in the remembrance of Christ crucified, and by which we move the mercy and tender love of God to look on our needs and supply our wants.

The Sacraments are the chief means of our salvation, for they are the outward signs, ordained by Jesus Christ Himself, which, by applying the merits of His Precious Blood to our souls, give us grace each time we receive them worthily.

Especially is the Blessed Sacrament meant to be the daily food of our soul, to build it up and keep it strong against all the attacks of temptation. In the Sacrament of Penance we have the healing medicine of our soul, to cleanse us from the sickness of sin that makes our soul so weak, and leads to its death through loss of grace. Besides taking away the stain of sin, it gives us also fresh supplies of grace to help us to avoid sin more carefully in the future.

Then you can find many other ways in which the Church helps her children; for instance, Devotions such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross; Devotions to the Sacred Heart, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the Saints; Confraternities and Guilds: all these are given us by the Church in order that we may grow in love for God and draw nearer to Him in our daily lives, and thus go on growing more and more pleasing in His sight, so that when our life ends we shall be worthy to take our place along with the Angels and Saints in Heaven. Remember, that is the whole aim and object of our life here. God wants us with Him in Heaven, and we must make use now of the means which He tells us are necessary in order to get to Heaven. Compared with this, all else is of no account: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mark viii. 36).

CHAPTER XIV

ONCE more I want you to go back to the idea of the Church as a sort of "club." You remember I said that when you are asked to join some club you would most likely ask, "What good shall I get out of it?" You have now seen what good you get out of belonging to the Church. She will tell you, without possibility of mistake, how you are to set about saving your soul, and she will give you all the help you need in doing it. Surely that is a great benefit, far greater than the benefits given by all other clubs and societies put together. So if you are wise, and I hope you are, you will at once say, "I cannot afford to do without the Church. I must make use of everything she will give me."

But there is another point which you must always bear in mind. When you join a club it is not enough that you should enjoy all the benefits: you also undertake duties as a member. You bind yourself to keep the rules of the club, and to do your best to help on the club by acting up to the spirit which keeps it alive. By this I mean that a club needs active members to keep it alive and going.

"Slackers" are no good in a club: in fact, they are a nuisance, and a hindrance to others. For example, in a Scout troop a boy who does not attend parades regularly, who does not try to earn his badges, and who disobeys his Scoutmaster and patrol leader, may *call* himself a Scout, but you know that he is not *really* a Scout. He is more nuisance than he is worth. Yet he will often be allowed to remain in, in the hope of getting him to "buck up."

Now this is also true of membership of the Church. If you expect to have your share in the benefits of grace which the Church offers you, you have to do your part. There are certain strict rules to obey. For instance, you must go to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, unless you have a good reason for being absent. You must go to Communion at least once a year, at Easter-time. You must abstain from flesh meat on Fridays and some other days; and later on, when you grow up, you have to keep the law of fasting at certain seasons.

This is the least you must do. But remember, in order to get the full benefit, you must live up to the spirit of the Church. Do not be satisfied with doing the very least required, but be keen to do as much as you

can. Dread to become a "slacker." See that your morning and night prayers are never missed. Do not be afraid of going to Mass, and receiving Holy Communion on other days than Sunday. Do not imagine that the world will come to an end if you receive Communion oftener than on the first Sunday of the month. Make a habit of wearing a scapular, and of carrying a Rosary in your pocket. Then see that you do not leave that Rosary always in your pocket. Pull it out frequently, every day if you can, and use it. If you cannot say a whole Rosary at once, say at least a decade.

Try to take an interest in the services of the Church, High Mass, Vespers, Benediction, and if possible offer yourself as an altar-server or a chorister. Join the clubs or guilds attached to your parish (not necessarily all of them, but at least one), and throw yourself heartily into the work that is being done.

I wonder whether you have any idea of the amount of work there is to be done, all connected with the Church to which you belong, and which will do so much to make you a live and energetic Catholic. Just look about you, and observe and think, and then ask yourself, "What can *I* do?" There are lots of things even a young boy or girl can do, if only you have the right spirit and the will to do them.

Ask your priest, ask your school-teachers, ask your parents. You will soon find that there is plenty of opportunity for you, and instead of becoming a " slacker," you will find that you can use up all your energy in exercising your membership of the Church, and working to save your own soul and the souls of others as well.

CHAPTER XV

THERE is one more point which I wish you to notice in connection with the Catholic Church. You have seen how it is a great Society, providing many great benefits. Yet, as is the case with every society, the benefits can be enjoyed only by those who are members of that Society. In order to become a member, it is necessary to be acknowledged as such by those who already are members, to be received into membership, and to be given some sign that you really are a member. Sometimes this is done by the ruling committee electing persons who wish to join: or in other cases it may be enough to have your name entered on the list of members, and pay your entry fee. In many cases a ticket of membership is given to the person who joins to show that now he is a member of the society and entitled to enjoy all the benefits. In some way or other, there must be acknowledgment by the society, or else the person cannot claim to be a member. Take any example you like—shall we say the Boy Scouts? You know it would not be enough for you to put on Scout's uniform and then

go about calling yourself a Scout. Unless you have been received into a properly organized troop, you would not really *be* a Scout, although you might *call* yourself one. And if you were found out, real Scouts would tell you that you were only a sham. You would have no right to enjoy the benefits of their Association.

Just in the same way, the Church intends her benefits, such as the Sacraments, Indulgences, and so on, only for those who really belong to her. Those outside her membership cannot claim the benefits.

You will remember that your Catechism tells you that Baptism is the Sacrament by which we are made Christians and members of the Church. And as this is, first of all, a spiritual membership—it is both spiritual and bodily —we say we are received into "the soul of the Church." But the Church has also an outward and visible existence, what we call the "body of the Church." It is necessary that we should belong to this also, and this we do by being in communion with the other members, all joined together under the headship of the Pope. It is only those who belong both to the soul and the body of the Church who have a right to the title of Catholic.

It is important that you should understand

this clearly, because in these days there is a likelihood of great confusion. You may now often meet people who say, "Oh yes, I'm a Catholic," and later on you find that they are what we call "High Church" people, who do not belong to our Church, but to the Church of England.

You have learnt in your history how at the Reformation, those who broke away from the authority of the Pope also taught new doctrines. They did away with the Mass, they did not believe in Our Lord's Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, they taught it was wrong to pray to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints: and because they protested against these and other Catholic beliefs and practices, they were known as Protestants, and Protestants they remained for nearly four centuries.

But in recent times many have come to see that the Reformation was wrong. They see that Jesus Christ founded one universal Church, and not a lot of warring sects. They believe that Christ ordained the Sacrifice of the Mass, and that He promised to be really present in the Blessed Sacrament. In short, we may say that now they believe all the truths that were denied at the Reformation, and they see that the Catholic Church is the

only true Church of Christ. But there is one barrier in their way. They will not yet submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome. So they accept all our beliefs, and copy all our practices, and then call themselves Catholics, although the Catholic Church does not recognize them as members.

Now, the reason I speak of these things is that I want you to be warned, and so be on your guard in this matter. I have known young Catholics to be deceived by this way of acting. They have gone to churches that have "Catholic Church" written on the notice-board outside: they have found inside the statues, altars, and confessionals to which they have grown accustomed in their own church. The ministers have called themselves "Catholic priests," and dress just as Catholic priests do. No wonder the real young Catholics were deceived, and thought they were hearing Mass, and receiving the true Sacraments in these churches. And yet, because their ministers are not *real* Catholics, not recognized as members of the Church by the authorities of the only true Church, their Mass and Sacraments are all a sham.

So you must take great care not to be taken in in this way. Remember, it is not enough that anyone should *call* himself a Catholic.

If you have any doubt about the matter, you should ask, " Are you a *Roman* Catholic ?" or " Does the Pope rule your Church ? " and not be satisfied till you get a clear answer to your question. You want the real Catholic Church, not one that only *calls itself* Catholic.

CHAPTER XVI

WELL, now I have come to the end of my talks with you about the Catholic Church. You are a member of the most wonderful and glorious Society that ever existed. It has the greatest of all objects as its end—the saving of souls. It is an unerring guide for you through life, and has a tender care for all your needs.

Consider, too, who are your fellow-members. First of all, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is your Father, Master, and Friend. Then Our Blessed Lady, who was given us to be our loving Mother. All the great Saints, and all those who have saved their souls and now reign in Heaven, are your brethren. While you honour them as the special friends of God, they look on you with yearning eyes, and pray continually that you too may one day find your place among them. There are others, who have left this world, but have not yet actually entered Heaven. They still have to pay the debt of the sins they committed here, and they are suffering in Purgatory. They, too, are your brethren, and as such, they cry out to you: " Have pity

on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me" (Job xix. 21). Listen to their piteous cry: let your heart melt with tender pity for their sorrow, and help them with your prayers and indulgences. They are your brethren, and have a claim on you: if you answer that claim, do you suppose they will forget that you, who have helped them in their need, also have a claim on them? They can help you, though they cannot help themselves, and by their prayers and intercession they will show that they are powerful as well as grateful brethren to you.

Then there are the vast multitudes, hundreds of millions, of men and women, boys and girls in every corner of the earth who are joined with you in the one Faith and one Church of Jesus Christ. Because they have all been born again by baptism into the family of God they are your brethren. They are leading lives just like your own: they have to face the same temptations and trials as you do. Have not they also a claim on your affection, a claim to be helped by your prayers and by your good example; and will not they recognize that you have the like claim on them? And thus in the great brotherhood of the children of God, in the Communion of

Saints as the Creed calls it, we find a wonderful source of help and strength in all our needs. Can you imagine a more glorious society of which to be a member than is the Catholic Church ? If you were not already a member, and you saw its beauty and power, you would lose no time in seeking admission. By God's mercy, you are already a member, and have been ever since you were baptized. Do you value your privilege ? Have you neglected your opportunities in the past, and thrown away occasions of grace through want of thought or laziness ?

Think over what I have said to you, and pray for light to understand more fully the mercy of God in making you a Catholic. Brace yourself up to do your very best, and resolve that never in all your life will you fall away from the Church, or grow slack in doing your duty. Your membership of the Catholic Church is not a thing of which you should feel ashamed, or which you should try to hide. On the contrary, glory in it because it is so high a favour, given you by God Himself; so that, should anyone ask you, " Are you a Catholic ?" you would truthfully answer: " Yes: and PROUD of it !"

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